

Vaccine mandate war: Is it unethical for health workers to forgo COVID shots?

On [July 13], seven health organizations—including the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, the Association for Professionals in Epidemiology and Infection, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society—published a consensus statement, saying that “[COVID-19 vaccination should be a condition of employment for all healthcare personnel.](#)”

Fully vaccinating health care workers has the advantage of protecting vulnerable patients, fellow health care workers, and the community overall, they write. And mandates are highly effective at getting high levels of vaccination among health care staff. For decades, many health care facilities have mandated seasonal flu vaccines to great success, they note.

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Many experts suggest that health care facilities may be holding back on mandates for fear of generating controversy or even fears of facing legal challenges.

“None of these are valid excuses,” [co-director of the Healthcare Transformation Institute at the University of Pennsylvania Ezekiel] Emanuel and his co-authors write in Stat. “Leadership requires taking the moral road even when it isn’t popular. And medical ethics—backed by recent regulatory and court decisions—supports the mandate decision as the best course for the nation’s health.”

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